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MILTON'S L'ALLEGRO & IL PENSEROSO.

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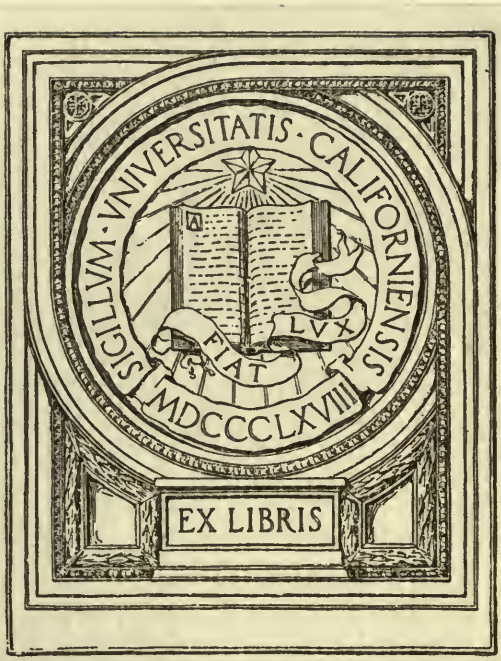
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MILTON'S

L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ETCHINGS ON STEEL,

BY BIRKET FOSTER.

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LONDON:
HENRY G. BOHN, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1865.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

L'ALLEGRO.

I. Portrait of Milton (from the Picture by Samuel Cooper) - - TITLE.

This Portrait was formerly in the possession of Milton's daughter, Deborah; it then passed into the hands of Sir William Davenant, and subsequently into those of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

II. Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night raven sings. - - - - - PAGE 1

III. Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides. - - - - 2

IV. To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies. - - - - 3

V. Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow,
Through the sweet-brier or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine - - - - - 4

VI. Oft listening how the hounds and horn,
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn. - - - - 4

VII. Some time walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green. - - - - 5

VIII. While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land. - - - - - 5

IX. And the milkmaid singeth blythe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale,
Under the hawthorn in the dale. - - - - - 6

X. Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray. - - - - 7

XI. Mountains, on whose barren breast,
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide. - - - - - 7

XII. Towers and battlements it sees,
Bosom'd high in tufted trees. - - - - - 8

XIII. Where, perhaps, some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes. - - - - 8

XIV. Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From between two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,
Are at their savoury dinner set. - - - - - 9

XV. And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves. - - - - 9

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

XVI. And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the checker'd shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holyday. - - - - - PAGE 10

XVII. Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How fairy Mab the junkets eat. - - - - 11

XVIII. Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes,
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms. - - - - - - 12

XIX. Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse. - - - - - 13

IL PENSEROSO.

XX. But hail, thou goddess sage and holy,
Hail, divinest Melancholy! - - - - - 14

XXI. Thee, bright-hair'd Vesta, long of yore,
To solitary Saturn bore;
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her. - - - - - - - 15

XXII. And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure. - - - 16

XXIII. Thee, chantress, oft, the woods among,
I woo, to hear thy even-song. - - - - 17

XXIV. And, missing thee, I walk unseen,
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon. - - - - 18

XXV. Oft on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide water'd shore. - - - - 19

XXVI. Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear. - - - - 20

XXVII. Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute drops from off the eaves. - - - - 21

XXVIII. And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, goddess, bring,
To arched walks of twilight groves. - - - - 22

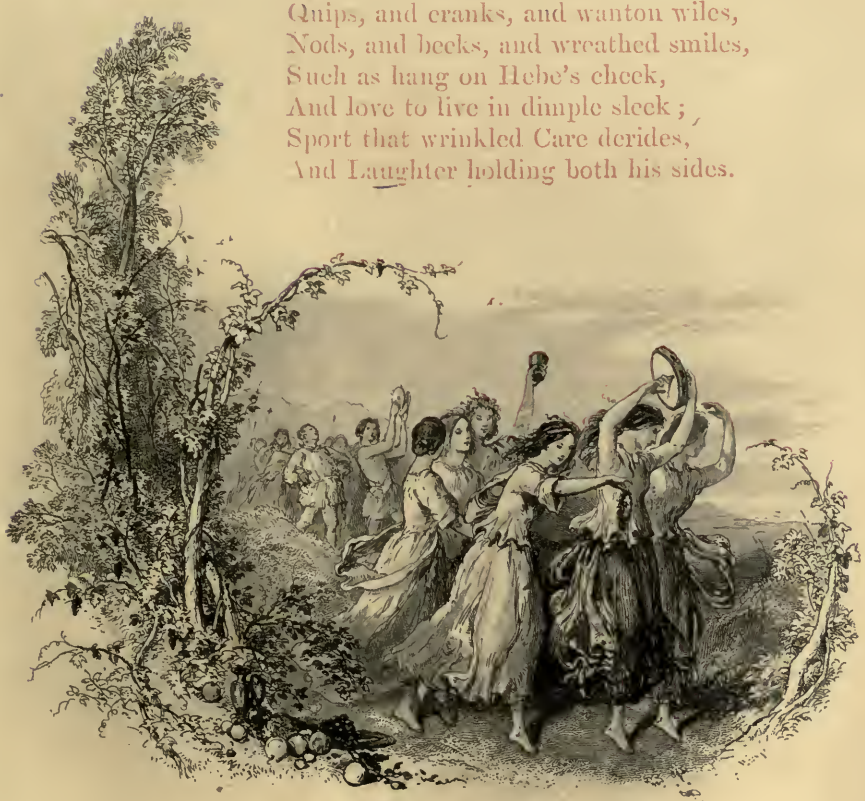
XXIX. But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters' pale. - - - - 23

XXX. And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell. - - - - 24

L'ALLEGRO.

Hence, loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy;
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night raven sings:
There, under ebon shades, and low-brow'd rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark cimmerian desert ever dwell.

But come, thou goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne,
And, by men, heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sages sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses wash'd in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.



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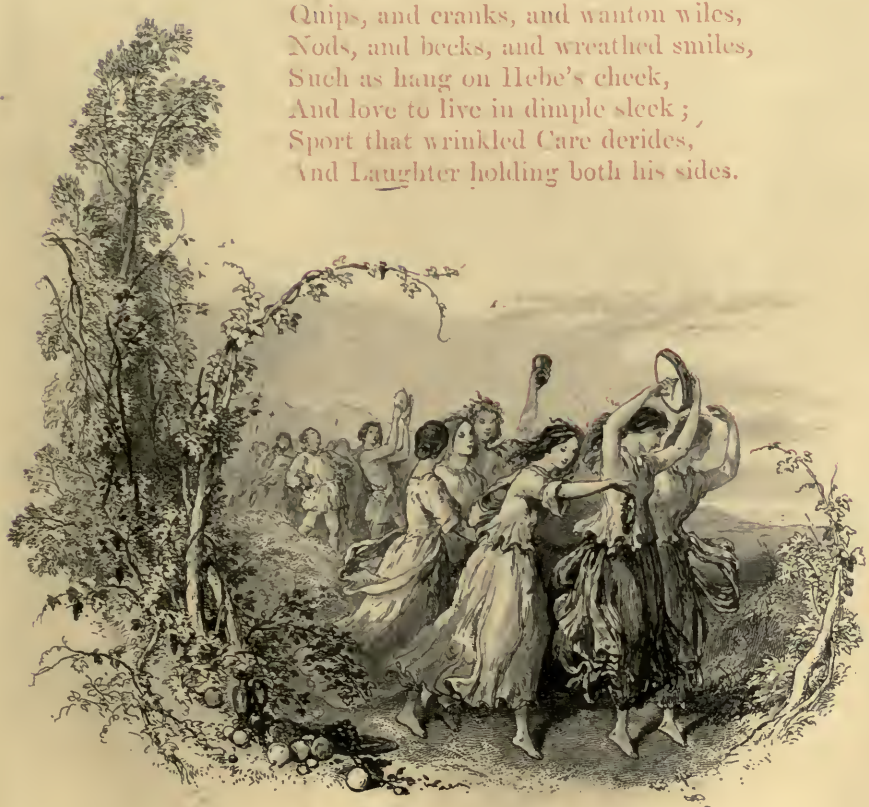

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Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;

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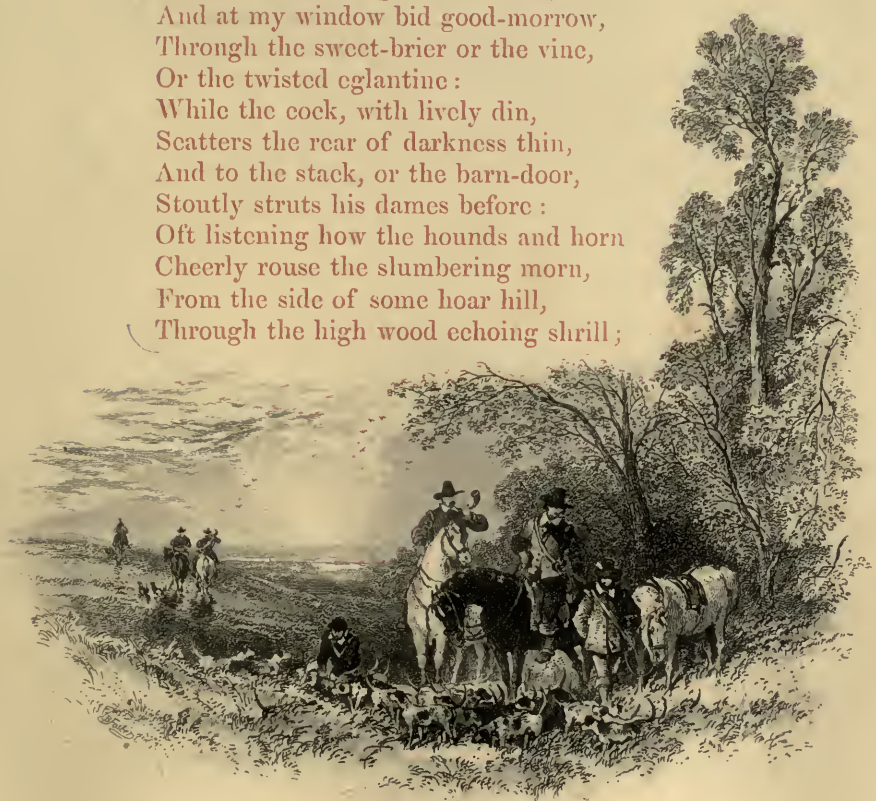
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-brier or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine:
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill;



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Some time walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great sun begins his state,
Robed in flames, and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;

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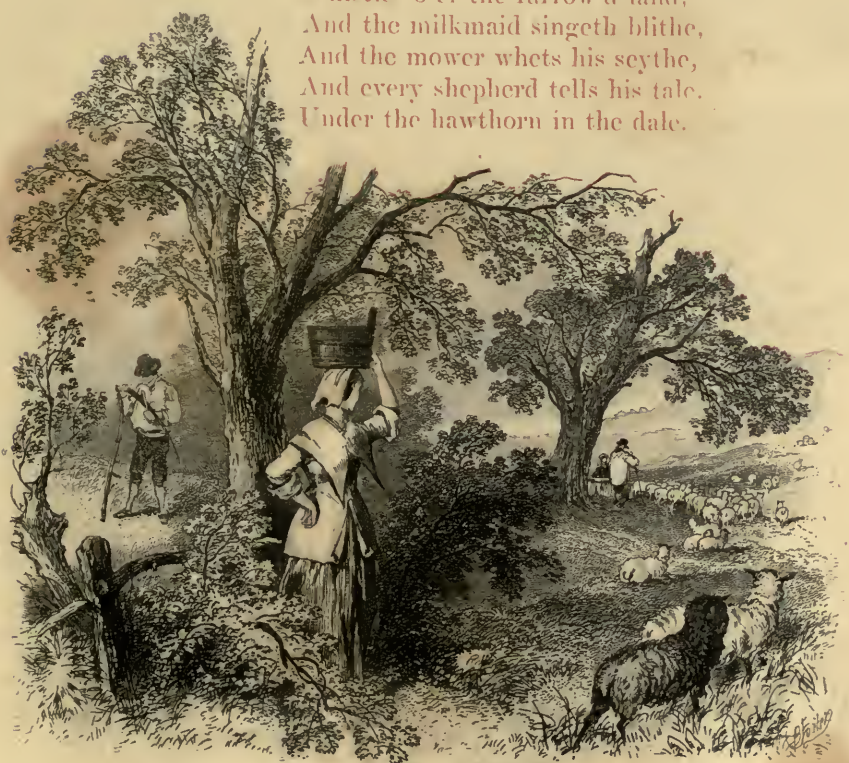
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale,
Under the hawthorn in the dale.



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Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landscape round it measures;
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains, on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;

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Towers and battlements it sees
Bosom'd high in tufted trees,
Where, perhaps, some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.

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Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met,
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs, and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tann'd haycock in the mead.

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Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequer'd shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holyday,
Till the live-long daylight fail:

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Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How fairy Mab the junkets eat;
She was pinch'd, and pull'd, she said;
And he, by friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When, in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath thresh'd the corn,
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,
And, stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
And, crop-full, out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lull'd asleep.

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Tower'd cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.

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And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self might heave his head,
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heap'd Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto, to have quite set free
His half-regain'd Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth with thee I mean to live.

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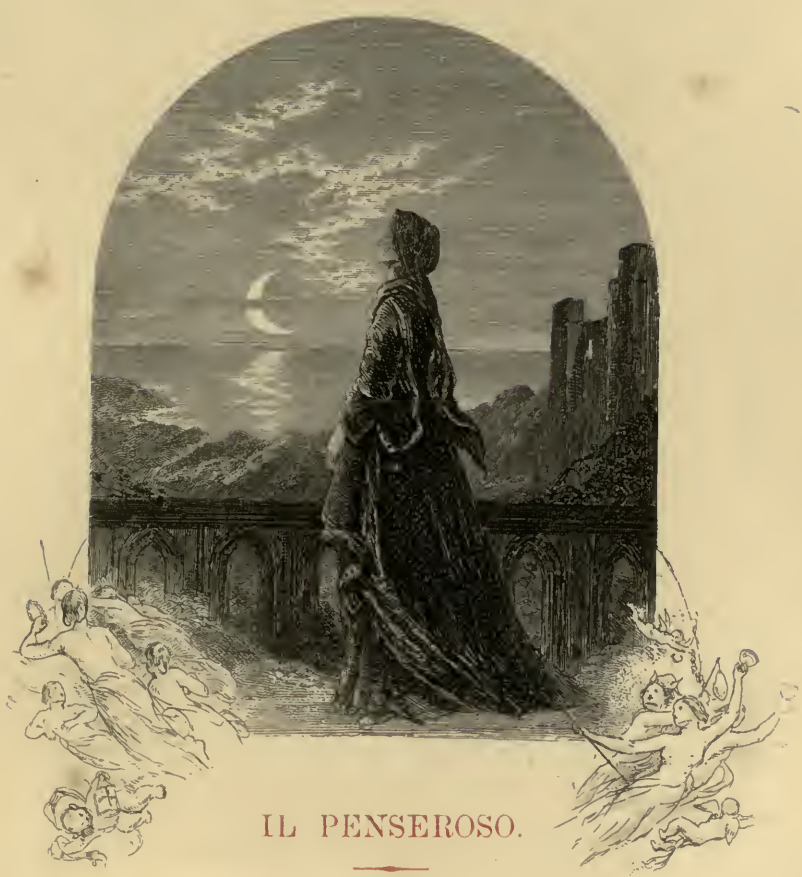

IL PENSEROSO.

HENCE, vain deluding joys,
The brood of folly, without father bred!
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But, hail! thou goddess sage and holy,
Hail, divinest Melancholy!

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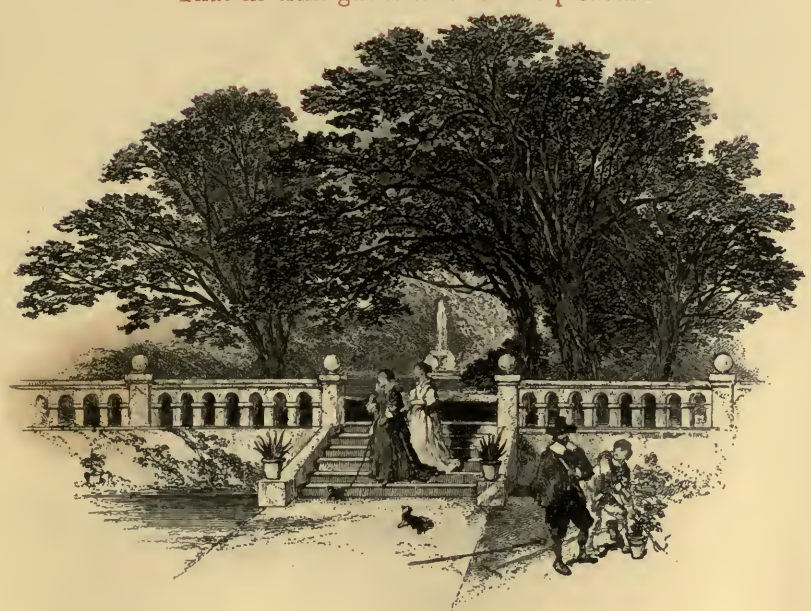
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And, therefore, to our weaker view,
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starr'd Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended:
Yet thou art higher far descended;
Thee, bright-hair'd Vesta, long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain:
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.

Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn,
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thy eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till,
With a sad leaden downward cast,
Thou fix them on the earth as fast;
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses, in a ring,
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure.



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But first, and chiefest, with thee bring,
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
The cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke,
Gently o'er the accustom'd oak:
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chantress, oft, the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;

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And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way;
And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.

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Oft on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide water'd shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar:
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removed place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom:
Far from all resort or mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm.

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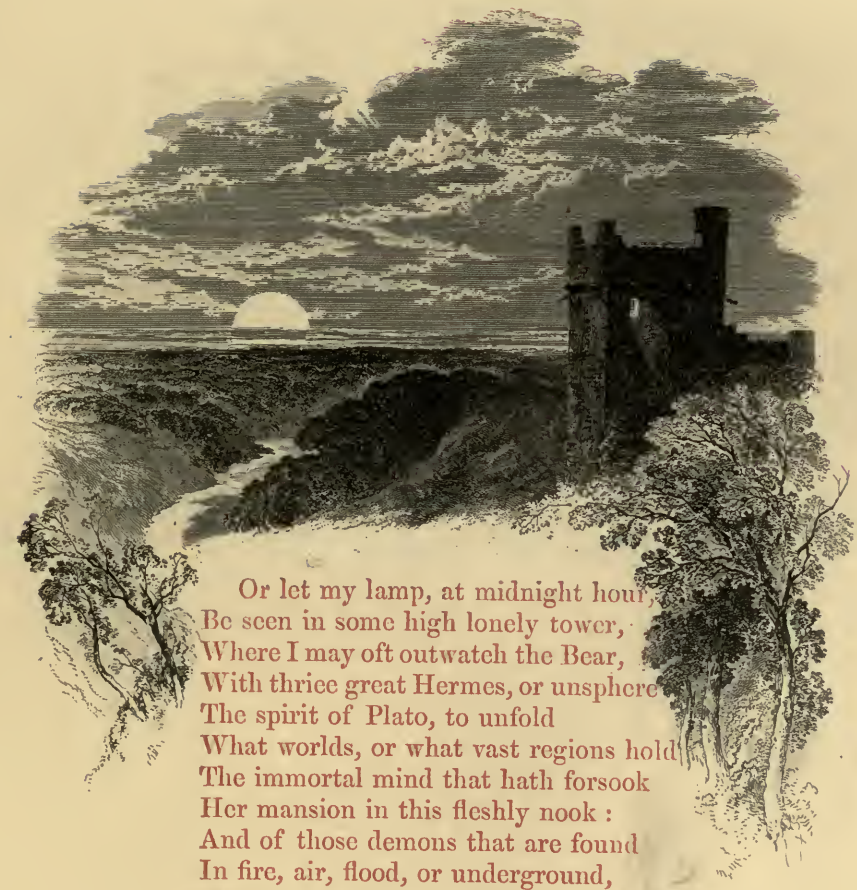

Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds, or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent,
With planet or with element.
Sometimes let gorgeous Tragedy,
In sceptred pall, come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes' or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine;
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.
But, O, sad virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower!
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made hell grant what love did seek:

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Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That own'd the virtuous ring and glass;
And of the wondrous horse of brass,
On which the Tartar king did ride:
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Nor tricked and frounced as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kercheft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute drops from off the eaves,

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And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, goddess, bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe, with heaved stroke,
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee, with honied thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep;

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And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid.
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen genius of the wood.
    But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters' pale,
And love the high embower'd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light :

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There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth show
And every herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

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